FANNY WHARTON; OR, WOMAN'S LOVE.

BY JOHN M. EVANS.

O Love, forsake me not!
Mine were a lone, dark lot,
Bereft of thee. HEMANS.

THE allusions made by a certain class of authors to the inconstancy of woman's affections have, of late, become so frequent that the mind turns in disgust from their invidious comparisons and unjust attacks.

With them a tale appears incomplete unless it depicts, in glowing colors, the fickleness of some fair one, or indulges in strains of sarcastic wit, intended to display in a ludicrous light the purest and holiest feelings of her nature.

Why is it that men—ay, and even those of the opposite sex!—will prostitute their talents by pandering to the vitiated tastes of a few (for we are unwilling to believe that many such exist) who seem to delight in gazing upon scenes which represent the fall and degradation of their fellow-beings? Does not the blush of shame suffuse the cheek of him who gives to the world that which the *lofty* character of *woman* stamps as false? And does it not deepen on the fair brow of her who can thus basely betray the interests and peace of her own sex, or lend her aid in deteriorating its true claims to man's admiration? We think that talent might be more profitably employed in advocating those claims, and in endeavoring to elevate woman to even a higher position in the moral scale than she now occupies.

Such an effort would not only correspond with the enlightened views of the nineteenth century, but it might snatch from oblivion the names of those who, in traducing the character of *woman*, give proof that they are ill calculated to contribute to the tastes of an enlightened people. Their views might have been appreciated in the dark ages of barbarism, when her true position was scarcely acknowledged. The physical powers of woman are, it is true, unequal to man's; but in regard to the powers of the mind, in many respects she rises far his superior. That bold development of thought which characterizes the intellect of the latter is surpassed in woman by a peculiar gentleness, which, in its general effect, is more powerful and striking: and there is, within the recesses of her heart, a depth of feeling that is unfathomable; a fountain whose waters sparkle in the bright sunshine of love, and cease not to flow when the horizon is darkened by the portentous clouds of sorrow.

Like the ivy, whose tendrils for years have twined amid some crumbling ruins, with all the tenderness of her nature she clings to the object of her early love, with a hallowed fondness and tenacity that earth cannot sever. Ah! there is a beauty in woman's undying love. No emblem of purity more perfect exists on this side of heaven.

To corroborate the truth of these general remarks, permit me, kind reader, to relate the following simple, yet truthful, narrative.

About three years since, I spent a few days amid the classic scenes of Wyoming Valley. During one of my pedestrian excursions, a short distance above Wilkesbarre, on the opposite side of the river, my attention was attracted by the peculiar neatness of a cottage, situated about fifty yards from the main road. From the singularity and beauty of its construction, so different from anything in the vicinity, I felt a strong inclination to examine more closely what to me appeared the abode of peace and contentment.

Acting under the impulse of my wishes, I entered the little gate that opened upon a lawn of velvety green in front of the house, and was slowly wending my way amid the fragrance exhaled from the flowers of Autumn, which bloomed in all their departing beauty around, when I was suddenly aroused from the agreeable reverie into which I had been thrown by the piercing shriek of a female. At first, I was unable to determine whence it proceeded, until a voice from the cottage called loudly for assistance I quickened my pace, and arrived just at the moment that a young man, apparently of my own age, rushed from a neighboring wood and bounded upon a piazza that had been concealed from view by a trellised arbor in front, over which twined the scented woodbine, while clusters of roses hung in rich profusion around. Beneath this pleasant retreat, extended upon a rustic settee, lay the apparently inanimate form of a lady, attended by one somewhat advanced in years—another, a few years younger than the sufferer upon the couch—besides the young gentleman already alluded to. For a time, no one seemed to notice my presence, and, fearful of intruding upon the privacy of the family circle, I was quietly taking my departure, when a hand was gently laid upon my shoulder. I turned, and recognized the young man I had just left, who, extending his hand, and calling me by name, invited me to a seat. I was soon, however, relieved from my astonishment at this familiarity on learning his name. It seemed almost impossible that I could so soon forget the features of one who, but a few years previous, had been my most intimate and confiding friend; yet he who then addressed me was no other than Frank Wharton, with whom I had spent my happiest school days.

It was pleasant thus unexpectedly to meet with

one whom I could address by the endearing title of *friend*, and feel that I was not entirely alone. As might be supposed, the afternoon wore rapidly away in discussing the events of past years—without, however, any allusion being made to the singular manner of my introduction, or the cause of his removal from his former home in Connecticut—until tea was announced; when I was duly presented to the mother and sister of Frank, neither of whom I had ever seen previous to that afternoon. At this moment, the door of an adjoining apartment opened, and presented to my view a young lady of surpassing beauty; who, on casting her eyes upon me, uttered a shriek more piercing than that which had startled me in the former part of the afternoon, and, swooning, fell into the arms of Frank. My curiosity was now fairly aroused relative to the nature of the mysterious influence I undoubtedly exercised over her; this I could in no manner account for. She was immediately removed to another room, and after the free use of restoratives, I was informed she had sufficiently recovered to explain, in an unconnected and incoherent manner, the cause of her distress, which was made known to Frank, who promised an explanation after tea. On reaching the piazza, my friend desired me to be seated, that he might communicate everything which appeared shrouded in mystery. I shall therefore use his own words, as nearly as possible:—

"On my return from school, I found everything at home prosperous, and promised myself much happiness with those I sincerely loved, and from whom I had been so long separated. But my father's failing health soon gave us sad premonitions that his society could not long be enjoyed; he was rapidly sinking under that fatal disease, consumption. Alas! our fears were too soon realized; in less than eight months after my return, he was committed to the silent grave. This was indeed a severe affliction, and one which we all felt most sensibly; but time healed the wound, and gradually the cheerfulness that hitherto had reigned amid our family circle once more resumed its sway over our hearts.

"And now was added to our number one whom we all loved; who for a long time had evinced a more than ordinary interest in my eldest sister Fanny, so singularly introduced to your notice this afternoon.

"Mr. Herman had removed from New York, and settled in our neighborhood a few months previous to my return from school; and from all that could be gathered from the general deportment of Henry, his son, he was in every respect an exemplary young man; possessing in a high degree those gentlemanly qualities which secured for him a welcome reception into the best families of the country.

"Fanny was among the first of his female acquaintances, and a mutual attachment was soon the result. Much of his leisure time was spent with her previous to the death of my father; but, after this bereavement, perhaps from feelings of condolence, or as the means of repairing, in part, the breach that all felt had been made by the hand of death, every evening brought our welcome visitor, whose endeavors to please and ingratiate himself into favor succeeded but too well. What were his particular motives, I could never ascertain; but of one thing I am convinced—that he was not actuated by those pure feelings of love which should characterize the advances of an honorable man. I will not attribute his protestations to an impurity of design; but rather persuade myself that his youth, and the surpassing beauty of Fanny, had awakened feelings which led him into the belief of love, when in reality the faintest spark of that passion had no existence in his breast.

"The summer had nearly passed, and many preparations were already completed for their approaching nuptials, to be celebrated the ensuing month, when Henry was unexpectedly called from home, to attend to some business in the adjacent town of L——. The evening previous to his departure was spent with his affianced bride; and all the sorrow attending a two days' separation of lovers was evinced by the swollen eyes of Fanny after his departure.

"But as all seasons arrive, so came the evening for Henry's return. Fanny had early stationed herself at a window from which she always watched his approach, casting anxious glances down the dusty road. But she was doomed to disappointment. The dark shadows of night gradually enshrouded each distant object, and one by one the stars glimmered through the gloom; but her eyes were strained in vain to descry the object of her solicitude. The evening gradually wore away, but a long and wearisome one it was to her: and the next morning I was early dispatched to ascertain if Henry had arrived. Imagine, therefore, my surprise to learn, from his own acknowledgment, that he had returned about two o'clock the previous day.

"After a very few moments' conversation, during which the name of Fanny was not once mentioned, I retraced my steps, wondering what could have produced a change so sudden and unaccountable as was displayed in the cool and indifferent reception I had met with.

"Long before I reached home, I beheld my sister approaching, and endeavored to fortify myself against her inquiries, feeling an unwillingness to tell her what I believed to be the true cause of his neglect. After assuring her of his safe return, and answering her innumerable questions as cautiously as truth would admit, I sought my mother, and communicated to her all my fears, which, as I shall show, were not groundless.

"The day to which I allude was Saturday; and, as the morning passed without bringing Henry, Fanny persuaded herself that he would come, as usual, in the afternoon, and with her enjoy their accustomed walk. Vain hope! Evening came, and brightly dawned the Sabbath morn; but there came no joys to dispel the sadness that had already taken possession of her heart. She resisted all our

attempts at persuading her to accompany us to church, and often have I blessed the resolution that prevented her yielding consent.

"My mother, through indisposition, was also prevented from filling her accustomed seat; our family being represented by my younger sister and myself.

"Scarcely had we taken our seats when the inquiring glances of those around us gave proof of some important arrival; and in a few moments Henry Herman escorted to his own pew a young lady whose dress and manners indicated those of a stranger. For a time, I could scarcely realize that what I beheld was not a dream, and endeavored to drive from my mind feelings of indignation that struggled for life, and whispered revenge against the perjured betrayer of my sister's happiness. Everything seemed now strongly to confirm the fears I had entertained; yet I could not believe that his was a heart so base, and hoped that some misunderstanding had caused the cessation of his visits, which, when explained, would again restore the smile of gladness and the rose-hued flush of health to the cheek of our sweet Fanny. But this was not the case; and on the following day, the truth of my suspicion was confirmed.

"Connected with the hotel at which Henry was stopping while at L———, was the principal stage office of the town; and on the morning of his departure, while his carriage was waiting at the door, a young lady presented herself to the agent, and desired a seat in the coach for B——; a request with which he could not comply, as every one had been previously engaged. At this she appeared very much disappointed, and inquired if there was no other mode of reaching the place that day; to which he replied that there was not, unless she would accept a seat in Mr. Herman's carriage, who resided within one mile of the place she intended visiting, and who, he thought, would not object thus to accommodate her.

"'Certainly not,' replied Henry, who had overheard the conversation; 'nothing could afford me more pleasure.' At first she was undecided whether to accept of such an offer from a perfect stranger, or remain; but her desire to reach the town that day finally triumphed over other feelings, and she was handed into the carriage by Henry, who immediately started for home.

"It is almost useless for me to follow them further. The acquaintance, thus singularly formed, soon ripened into love; and, sir, I have every reason to believe that Henry, though under most sacred obligations to another, pledged her his love before he had been in her society six hours.

"It soon became the general topic of conversation among gossiping neighbors; and that Fanny might be made acquainted with the truth by some sympathizing friend, I was appointed to tell her all. A more painful duty I never performed.

"I endeavored to arouse her pride, and advised her to treat him with the utter contempt he deserved; but in this I touched a chord in her woman's heart that could not respond to the feelings of my own, and never shall I forget the piercing look she fixed upon me as she replied—

"'Frank, do you suppose me deprived of a woman's heart?'

"It was all she could say; but that simple question spoke volumes. As well may the hand of man endeavor to calm the mighty heavings of the ocean, as attempt to crush the love of a young and confiding heart. There is in its operations a power that obeys no law. It springs unbidden into existence; and naught on earth can quench the kindling flame.

"I obtained an interview with Henry, hoping to effect a reconciliation, and secure a renewal of the attentions so long lavished upon my sister; not that I considered it an honor to have his name associated with ours, but in consideration of the sacred obligations he had of choice assumed in regard to her whose health or reason I feared would eventually sink under the effects of his cruel desertion. Accordingly, I requested him to call, in order that everything connected with his conduct might be explained. With this request he never complied.

"But months rolled on, and with them was borne every trace of the dreary winter. To us it had been cheerless indeed; and, as the soft breath of spring kissed each opening bud and flower, new life seemed infused into everything around, except the heart of Fanny. For her the season, with its expanding beauties, brought no smile; on the contrary, a settled melancholy seemed brooding o'er her spirits, that all our efforts could not dispel. The name of Henry was no longer mentioned in her presence; and now, more than ever, had we reason to dread the shock which the tidings of his recent marriage might create. Accordingly, every precaution was employed to keep it concealed from her, but without avail. An intimate friend of my mother's, while in the presence of Fanny, during the course of a general conversation, abruptly adverted to Henry's marriage.

"Alas! it was now too late to remedy what had been caused by the mere thoughtlessness of a friend; and, sir, from that moment my sister became *imbecile*. All recollections of the past seemed obliterated from memory. Her soul appeared steeped in the depths of forgetfulness, as the waves of oblivion's dark sea rolled in upon it.

"The lapse of years now renders her society a source of peculiar pleasure to me; but then I could scarcely bear to look upon her, so altered, yet still so beautiful. Ah! could Henry Herman but have beheld the unmeaning expression of that beautiful face, the dull and vacant stare of those soft blue eyes, so often the theme of his admiration, or gazed upon that wreck of youth's bright hopes, methinks it would have been as a thorn, rankling forever in the depths of his soul; but they have never seen each other since the fatal evening previous to his departure for L——.

"About two years since, we exchanged our former home in Connecticut for this beautiful spot, trusting

that a change of scenery would prove beneficial to my sister; and we had fondly believed that, with the apparent departure of everything connected with the recollection of bygone years, by her Henry was no longer remembered. But this day has proved to the contrary. The moment her eyes rested upon you, a fancied resemblance to the object of her love recalled those visions which we had hoped were buried with the past, and produced the painful effects you have witnessed. Though insensible to everything around, *his* image seems indelibly impressed upon her heart."

I had listened to this affecting narrative with fixed attention, and would gladly have accepted of my kind friend's invitation to prolong my visit, had I not entertained fears of again producing effects similar to those of which I had already been the unconscious cause. Accordingly, I left that interesting family; but never can I forget the sad impressions formed by the recital of that truthful tale. Fearful, indeed, must be the retribution awaiting him who can dare to act the part of Henry Herman! There is, in fact, no combination of language sufficiently strong to express the detestable character of one whose baseness leads him to trifle with the holy affections of woman—of one who, to gratify a feeling of pride, will, in deed if not in word, pledge his love, and then with perjured soul turn from the unfortunate victim of his false vows.

LEOPARDI.

BY HENRY T. TUCKERMAN.

Provincial life in Italy can scarcely be realized by an American except through observation. However remote from cities, or sequestered in location, may be a town in this country, if not connected with the great world by railroad and telegraph, the newspaper, the political representative, and an identity of feeling and action in some remote enterprise or interest, keep alive mutual sympathy and intelligence. But a moral and social, as well as physical isolation belongs to the minor towns of the Italian peninsula. The quaint, old stone houses inclose beings whose existence is essentially monastic, whose knowledge is far behind the times, and whose feelings are rigidly confined within the limits of family and neighborhood. A more complete picture of still-life, in the nineteenth century, it is difficult to imagine, than many of these secluded towns present. The dilapidated air of the palaces, the sudden gloom of the narrow streets, as one turns into them from the square, where a group of idlers in tattered cloaks are ever engaged in a game or a gossip, the electrical effect of a traveling-carriage, or a troop of soldiers invading the quiet scene, at once inform even the casual visitor of the distance he is at from the spirit of the age. With the decayed air of the private houses, their worn brick floors and primitive furniture, contrast impressively the extensive and beautiful view usually obtainable from the highest windows, and the architectural magnificence of the church. We are constantly reminded that modern amelioration has not yet invaded the region; while the petty objects to which even the better class are devoted, the importance attached to the most frivolous details of life, the confined views and microscopic jealousies, or dilettante tastes that prevail, assure us that liberal curiosity and enlarged sympathy find but little scope in these haunts of a nation devoid of civil life, and thrust upon the past for mental nourishment.

It is, however, comparatively easy to imagine the influence of such an environment upon a superior intelligence. Recoiling from the attempt to find satisfaction in the external, thus repressed and deadened, the scholar would there naturally turn to written lore with a singular intensity of purpose; the aspirant would find little to tempt him from long and sustained flights into the ideal world; and the thinker would cling to abstract truth with an energy more fond and concentrated from the very absence of all motive and scope for action and utterance. It is thus that we account, in part, for the remarkable individuality and lonely career of Giacomo Leopardi, one of the greatest scholars and men of genius modern Italy has produced. He has left a glimpse of this monotonous and ungenial life in one of his poems—*La Vita Solitaria*:—

"La mattutina pioggia, allor che l'al
Battendo esulta nella chiusa stanza
Le gallinella ed al balcon s'affaccia
L'abitator de'campi, e il Sol che nasce
I suoi tremuli rai fra le cadenti
Stille saetta, alla capanna mia
Dolcemente picchiando, mi risveglia;
E sorgo, e i lievi nugoletti, e il primo
Degli augelli susurro, e l'aura fresca,
E le ridenti piagge benedico;
Poichè voi, cittadine infauste mura,
Vidi e conobbi assai, là dove segue
Odio al dolor compagno; e doloroso
Lo vivo, e tal morrò, deh tosto! Alcuna
Benche scarsa pietà pur mi dimostra
Natura in questi lochi, un giorno oh quanto
Verso me pin cortere.

Leopardi was the son of a count, whose estates are situated at Recanti, in the March of Ancona, and here his early youth was passed chiefly in his father's library, which consisted wholly of theological and classical books. After being taught Latin